

PBC



# FORUM

*Area Planning Board*

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## We're counting on you. Answer the census.

April 1, 1980 is Census Day. It is a day, perhaps more than any other, when every person in this country counts — literally. The title of this newsletter is the official slogan of the 1980 Census. As this phrase implies, the success of the census is based on the people responding to it. Additionally, the people are counted by various characteristics and geographic areas as part of the largest peacetime effort in our Nation's history.

### WHY HAVE A CENSUS?

When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in 1787, they decided that population distribution should be the basis for direct taxation and for apportionment in the House of Representatives. Thus they approved a Constitutional requirement that every person in the Nation be counted at least once every ten years, beginning in 1790.

In addition to the Constitutional uses of the census for apportionment purposes, there are at least 25 Federal programs that specifically require the use of census data. More than 90 additional programs, while not specifically mentioning the census, require data that come from or depend on the decennial census.

The following are some of the federal programs affecting Palm Beach County that depend on census information to guide the allocation of funds to States and local communities: Employment & Training, Unemployment Insurance, Health Services, Alcohol & Drug Abuse, Mental Health Centers, Community Action Programs, Housing & Community Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, Community Colleges, Airport and Airway Development, Educationally Deprived Children, Handicapped Children, Headstart, Federal Aid to Highways, Highway Safety, Land & Water Conservation, Agricultural Research, Cooperative Extension Service, Special programs for Elderly, Water and Waste Disposal, Law Enforcement Assistance,

Nutrition for the Elderly, Rural Development, Emergency School Aid, Industrial Development, Summer Youth Recreation, Anti-Recession Assistance, Public Library Construction and Services, and Comprehensive Employment and Training Act.

Besides the agencies involved in preparing grant applications to qualify for such programs, numerous other organizations use census data for such things as planning new businesses, branch offices of capital improvements or surveying trade or service areas. Market analysts, bankers, realtors, government officials, students, business and industry officials are just some of the people who rely on census data. In 1979, the Area Planning Board handled over 5,100 requests for information, many of them census related.

### WHAT IS THE CENSUS?

The 1980 Census is only the 20th time that our Nation has taken time to count its people, to learn who we are, what we do, and where and how we live. Taken collectively, the decennial census forms the backbone of our history.

The first census in 1790 took 18 months to complete and showed a population of just under four million. By contrast, the 1980 census is expected to count some 222 million people residing in approximately 86 million housing units. Nationwide the 1980 census will provide data for 3,100 counties, 20,000 municipalities, 45,000 census tracts, and 2,500,000 city blocks. Locally the data will apply to Palm Beach County, 37 municipalities, 142 census tracts, and thousands of city blocks.

On April 1, 1980, every resident in the country will be asked a series of six questions on population: household relationship, sex, race, age, marital status, and Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent. Eight housing questions also will be asked, number of units, plumbing facilities, number of rooms, tenure, condominium



identification, value of home, rent, and vacancy status. In addition to the items asked of everyone, up to 24 population questions and 19 housing questions will be asked of a scientifically selected sample of the population, approximately 1 household out of 5.

### HOW DOES ONE PARTICIPATE IN THE CENSUS?

Every household in the United States will receive a questionnaire in the mail on March 28. In 90% of the nation's households, including all of Florida, people will be asked to take their own census, in effect, by answering the questionnaires on April 1 and mailing them back in postage free envelopes. Census takers will obtain the information from households that fail to mail back completed questionnaires as requested. For every 1% of the population that cooperates with the request to mail back the completed questionnaires, taxpayers will save \$2 million in follow up costs.

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CENSUS IS TAKEN?

Soon after some 86 million households answer and return their 1980 census questionnaires, each questionnaire will be checked at the nearest of 409 district offices to see that all questions have been answered completely before being shipped to one of three regional processing centers. The District office serving Martin, Palm Beach, and Northeast Broward counties is located in downtown West Palm Beach.

Current law requires that any information collected from an individual be used only for compiling statistical totals. In fact, no name or address ever enters any computer. This helps to guarantee that information traceable to a specific individual or household will not be released. Under penalty of fine and imprisonment, no information concerning a particular individual, may be released to anyone other than that individual, not even at the request of the President or any other government agency. In the history of the Census Bureau, no census employee has ever been charged with a breach of this confidentiality.

By January 1, 1981, the first 1980 population report must be ready for the President. After nine months of round-the-clock processing, the Census Bureau will have fulfilled its first responsibility: to provide a count of the Nation's population by State for purposes of Congressional apportionment. Three months later, one year after Census Day, more detailed population counts for counties, cities, and other political subdivisions must be provided to each State for potential use in the redistricting of their legislatures.

### WHAT WILL THE CENSUS TELL US?

Through the responses of some 86 million households to the 100% and sample questions on population and housing, the Census Bureau will publish an estimated 300,000 pages of 1980 census statistics.

Sharp changes in American family life, income, housing costs, population distribution, and Congressional representation will be revealed by the 1980 census, along with one of the lowest population growth rates in our history.

The American family has changed dramatically in 10 years. The 1980 census is expected to show that: 1) The number of husbandless women who are heading families has soared nearly 50% since 1970 to more than 8 million; 2) The traditional family household of mother, father, and one or more children now accounts for less than a third of the nation's households, the lowest percentage ever; 3) Both husband and wife have earned income in about one-half of the 48 million husband-wife families in the U.S., a new high; and 4) The number of unmarried couples sharing a household has more than doubled in 10 years.

Income data will be of interest to economists and others. Discounting inflation, there was a 34% increase in median family income between 1960 and 1970, but the increase from 1970 to 1978 was only 4%. The big drop can be attributed to economic sluggishness and to changing age structure and family composition. Compared to the 1960's, a higher percentage of people are now in their early, rather than mature, earning years.

Surveys conducted by the Census Bureau since 1970 indicate that the cost of keeping a roof over one's head will be higher than ever in 1980. From mid-1977 to mid-1978, the average price of a new home jumped from \$54,200 to \$62,500, more than 15%.

As for population distribution, the 1980 census is expected to define sizable population shifts from Northern and Eastern States to the Southern and Western areas. The 1980 census data will measure population shifts by age, race, ethnic origin, and other characteristics. Since 1973 the Census Bureau has found that Blacks moving to the South outnumber those leaving, reversing a trend of more than 100 years. This census will provide detailed characteristics on the Black population and demonstrate whether the Blacks moving into the South are newcomers or are simply returning to the South.

Recent population estimates by the Census Bureau suggest that extensive redrawing of Congressional district boundaries will be necessary after the 1980 census. Florida may be in a position to capture as many as four additional House seats, and California, Texas, Utah, Oregon, Tennessee, Washington, and Arizona may gain one or more seats. New York, Ohio, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and South Dakota may lose seats.

Of special interest to census data users in Florida, the Census Bureau has recently designed procedures to



obtain some information on the seasonal population of certain areas of the Country. Although the standard tabulations from the 1980 census will be based on a person's usual residence, there are plans to produce special tabulations to provide counts of households and household members who indicate that they are not residing at their usual residence on Census Day. These new tabulations will be restricted to the housing units occupied entirely by seasonal residents on April 1, 1980, and only information collected on a 100% basis will be made available, such as age and sex. The tabulations will not include individuals staying temporarily in hotels, motels, or homes of permanent residents.

### DOES THE CENSUS COUNT EVERYONE?

While the census attempts to count everyone who is in this country on Census Day, not everyone is counted. In 1970 most undercounts occurred in areas with concentrated minority and low income populations. The Census Bureau estimates that it missed 2.5% of the total population (5.3 million people) broken down into 1 out of 7 Hispanic-Americans, 1 out of 14 blacks, and 1 out of 50 whites. The Bureau attributes this to a combination of factors such as difficulties in locating households, the general reluctance of many people to give personal information to the government, and language barriers and other difficulties in filling out the questionnaires.

Although the undercount in 1970 was the smallest recorded in the history of the census, it was still a serious problem. Maynard Jackson, Mayor of Atlanta, says that the 1970 undercount cost his city \$11.7 million in federal employment assistance over 5½ years. Washington Mayor Marion Barry claims that in Fiscal Year 1978 the undercount cost the capital city \$1.9 million, and New York City estimates a loss of \$10.7 million in general revenue sharing funds. The Houston area Urban League has estimated that Harris County, which includes Houston, was undercounted by more than 300,000 and deprived of more than \$6 million in revenue sharing funds.

### WHAT IS BEING DONE TO INCREASE THE RESPONSE TO THE CENSUS?

A new concept successfully tested in the Richmond, Virginia area dress rehearsal was the Complete Count Committee. As a result, all local governments are being encouraged to form one. The Area Planning Board recently organized a Complete Count Committee for Palm Beach County. Included on the Committee are representatives from all of the municipalities and Chambers of Commerce, various County agencies and departments, social service agencies, the media, financial and educational institutions, business, and industry. The Committee is charged with enhancing the Census Bureau's national publicity cam-

paign by supplementing it with local publicity and informational activities.

A second new concept for the 1980 Census is the Local Review Program. The highest elected official of each of the 39,000 revenue sharing governments from the county level down will be provided data in two phases. The first phase of the Local Review Program, "Pre-enumeration local review," will take place before Census Day. Each governmental unit will receive address counts for their jurisdiction, any sub-units within it, and the applicable statistical areas down to the ED or block level within the local political unit. A set of census maps also will be provided as a review aid. Both the maps and the preenumeration address counts will reflect January 1, 1978, political boundaries. The local Officials' review should be complete and comments returned to the Bureau's local offices by Census Day, April 1, 1980.

The second and major phase of the program, "post-enumeration local review," takes place after the enumeration is complete in all areas. In this phase, preliminary population and housing counts derived from the field operations, including group quarters population and vacant housing unit counts, will be provided for each governmental unit including any sub-units and statistical areas within them.

The Bureau is committed to reviewing all potential discrepancies uncovered in the review by local officials. However, in order for the Bureau to review comments or possible discrepancies and take corrective action where necessary, detailed supportive evidence from the local governments will be required for both the preenumeration and post-enumeration review phases. It will not be feasible for the Bureau to recheck an area solely on the feeling that a count seems too low or too high.

In conjunction with the review by local officials, a review of the preliminary population and housing unit counts will be performed by Bureau district office personnel. If problems are detected, a field check will be made and corrective action taken as necessary. As part of the Bureau's own review and evaluation of the preliminary field counts, the Bureau will use locally prepared estimates of population and housing by census tract, such as those prepared by the Area Planning Board.

In the final analysis, however, the success of the 1980 Census depends on all of us. So on Census Day, April 1, remember:

**We're counting on you.  
Answer the census.**



## AREA PLANNING BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

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### 1980 MAPS, GRAPHS AND STATISTICAL DATA REPORT AVAILABLE

We are pleased to announce that the 1979/80 edition of Maps, Graphs and Statistical Data is now available. This report is divided into three (3) sections: General, Population and Housing Characteristics; Selected Economic & Marketing Characteristics; and Health, Education and Recreation. Over 1,600 requests were received for the 1978 edition. Price at office \$8.00 or by mail \$8.80 (includes 4th class postage). Contact Area Planning Board of Palm Beach County, 2300 Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard, Suite 200, West Palm Beach, Florida 33409, phone (305) 683-9450. Make check payable to Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners. Payment must be received in advance; we are not permitted to invoice.

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